

Luke 3 pt 1

Luke 3: 1-6

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord;
Make His paths straight.
⁵ Every valley shall be filled
And every mountain and hill brought low;
The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough ways smooth;
⁶ And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

1. Luke is setting backdrop as he introduces the last of all the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist
2. It's not just a story, he's showing us verifiable history
 - a. By helping us identify the political & religious scenes
 - i. The political scene mentions Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Philip and Lysanias (5)
 1. Corruption, immorality and cruelty were rampant

- ii. The religious scene mentions Annas and his son in law Caiaphas who were longest reigning high priests (2)

3. This is when The Word of the Lord comes to John in the wilderness

- a. 18 years of obscurity have passed as both John the Baptist and Jesus were not yet known to Israel
- b. Like every great king, Jesus has a herald go before and prepare the way for His arrival
- c. The Jews could not say there was no warning before Messiah arrived on the scene

4. During this time when there is chaos in the political & religious arena

- a. No word from God for 400 years
- b. As things seem bleak, God is ready to bring deliverance,
 - i. just as it is often darkest just before dawn breaks
 - ii. Now John hears God speak to Him in the wilderness
 - iii. It may seem like an uncomfortable place, but its quiet

- iv. The wilderness is for those who really are seeking God
- v. So if you are there by choice, continue waiting; God will speak
- vi. If you are in there against your will, rejoice, God wants a private meeting with you

I. Proclamation of comfort, crossing, clarity

A. Comfort

1. The heart of the text is The voice of one crying in the wilderness
 - a. John the Baptist is declaring that the Word of God that Isaiah heard in Isaiah 40 is now being fulfilled
 - i. After 39 chapters of judgment comes a comfort to God's people
 - ii. **Is 40:1** "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins." 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

“Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert
A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked
places shall be made straight And the rough places
smooth; 5 The glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the
Lord has spoken

iii. **Comfort, yes comfort my people**

iv. This is incredible because if any nation / people deserved
to be abandoned and forgotten, it would be Israel

v. If ever a people witnessed so much and believed so little

vi. If there was a reason for God to start fresh with a new
nation, Israel gave plenty of reasons

vii. **But not with our God**

1. The tenderness of God is revealed who will pardon
Israel for all of her sins

2. He's speaking with tenderness as a loving mother looking with compassion over her children
3. God did not forget His people
4. The punishment they received over the years was severe, but not permanent
5. The comfort then is that God is pouring out abundant grace to pardon His people through Christ
6. **Because God never forgets His covenants**
7. **Is 59:21** "As for Me," says the Lord, "this is My covenant with them: My Spirit who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the Lord, "from this time and forevermore."
8. **God never forgets His covenant**

9. **Romans 15:8** Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers

10. Isaiah is not the only one spoke like this

11. Ezekiel drew such a picture to illustrate what will happen as one testament gives way to the next

a. As if one runner is passing the baton

2. **Ezekiel 16:1-8** Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying,
2 "Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: "Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born. 6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7 I made you thrive like a plant in the field; and you

grew, matured, and became very beautiful. Your breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you were naked and bare.

8 "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God.

a. This is stronger than a proclamation, it's one of love in action

3. I believe this illustrates Israel's condition and God dealing with her throughout the O.T & N.T

a. While we were dead in sin we were left to die

i. Because the very sin is the thing that kills us

b. **I found you. I spoke life over you**

i. **I took care of you.**

ii. **And then I made you spectacularly beautiful,**

iii. This is when God took them from slavery and gave them a name among the nations

c. **I passed by you again, and your time was a time of love**

i. **Then the transition into the N.T**

- d. I spread my wing over you and covered you
 - i. He covered us with His blood (Heb 13:12)
 - ii. He washed us with the water of His Word (Ephesians 5:26)
 - iii. He anointed us with the oil of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 23:5).
 - e. He clothed us with the linen of His righteousness (Isaiah 61:10) and the silk of His own beauty (Psalm 149:4).
 - f. "I put badger skins upon your feet—not sandals that were used for working, but badger skins that were used for celebrating and dancing because I wanted the best for you." (Courson)
- 4. We're saying that this visitation is coming from a place of love and celebration to pardon every sin and set every captive free
 - 5. God has confirmed in the past and is repeating a Word of comfort over His people
 - 6. This is important to know
 - a. If our relationship with God is not based on His loving comfort, then we have religious exercises of trying to please God

B. Crossing

1. John is in the wilderness at the Jordan river baptizing people
2. This location is significant because this is where Joshua led the children of Israel, by crossing the river and taking the promised land
3. It's about 1300 feet below sea level with temps ranging between 110-115 degrees
 - a. This wilderness place at the Jordan is a picture of where the children of Israel are spiritually
 - i. In a dry and fruitless place
 - ii. Although Israel had much religious activity
 - iii. The Temple was filled with people, priests and sacrifices
 - iv. Yet they were dry and without hope
 - b. The wilderness reminds them of the 40 years of wandering
 - c. It's a visual sermon of current conditions but also one of hope & comfort
 - d. From this location, they were able to take Jericho

- e. It's symbolic of a new crossing is just ahead
- f. It's brining Israel back to her roots so they can remember
- g. **Psalm 42:6** O my God, my soul is cast down within me;
therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan...
 - i. As God has done it before, He's reminding them to hear tender comforts of God and remember that what He did with Joshua, He'll do with them
 - ii. They are about to cross from a wilderness place into a glorious place
 - iii. Not to possess real estate, but to inherit the kingdom of God with everything it entails

C. Clarity

1. Clarity about what it takes to make that happen
2. There is a role for God to play and one for us as well
3. Our part, prepare our own hearts, because we have a small role

4. God's role: fill the valleys, humble the mountains. ..

5. **Prepare the way of the Lord**

a. Our role: be open and believe

b. This is our preparation

c. Without this step, we will not benefit from what God is doing because He not force anyone who does not want Him

d. Gad, Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh did not cross

e. For everyone else, prepare your heart to hear the Word of the Lord and claim what rightfully belongs to you

f. **Preparation of the heart is the first step to repentance**

g. **This is where you take a good inventory of what's happening**

h. When you realize that you are in a dry place and distant from God, you turn from your previous direction and walk in God's direction

i. Now God is ready to do His part

6. Every valley shall be filled

a. Those who have been humbled by life and unable to lift themselves will be lifted up

b. The truly humble & broken will be lifted up

c. God's comfort comes to the lowliest first like in Matt 5, then the haughty are brought low

d. It's amazing that He starts with lifting up the broken; It's His heart

7. Every mountain and hill brought low

a. The haughty in spirit will be humbled

b. Like the religious leaders

8. The crooked places shall be made straight

- a. The dishonest and crooked ways in me will be straightened out

9. The rough ways smooth

- a. The rough and crude pieces of my life will be refined with a new nature

- b. This is what the end result will look like

10. We are not able to make permanent lasting changes in ourselves

11. God is the one who works as the potter and we are the clay

12. What our role is, simply is to be aware of these issues and bring them to God

13. Then all mankind shall see God's salvation

- a. In a broad sense, many in Israel witnessed Him in his first coming

b. All humanity will witness Him in His 2nd coming

c. On a more personal level, all of those in your circle of influence will not wonder if you are a believer

i. People will tell there is a difference about your life from how you live first before you speak

14. May God give us grace to open our hearts to Him and believe that what He did with Joshua, He'll do with us as well